

# NJ Trails Plan Update



## A Vision and Action Plan for New Jersey's Future

March 2009

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
The New Jersey Department of Transportation





## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

JON S. CORZINE  
*Governor*

MARK N. MAURIELLO  
*Acting Commissioner*

January 26, 2009

To New Jersey Residents and Visitors:

I am pleased to present to you the New Jersey Trails Plan. This plan revises and enhances the 1996 Trails Plan and presents a vision for trails to benefit all trail advocates, users, managers and planners. By creating a framework for current and future trails, this plan is a valuable tool outlining the necessary steps needed to realize that vision.

Trails provide a welcome respite from the rigors of daily life. They enhance our environment, economy and quality of life while offering health and fitness opportunities, outdoor classrooms for nature study, greenways for wildlife conservation, alternative transportation corridors and links with our historic past.

I would like to thank the New Jersey Trails Council and the Trails Plan Advisory Committee for their guidance and diligence in formulating ideas and recommendations for the New Jersey Trails Plan. I also appreciate the input of trail managers, organizations and the trail-using public who provided many comments and suggestions. Finally, I am grateful to the Department of Transportation for being our partner and funding this endeavor, making it possible to prepare this Plan.

As Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, I endorse the 2008 New Jersey Trails Plan Update to serve as a blueprint for present and future actions to improve trails throughout New Jersey.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark N. Mauriello".

Mark N. Mauriello  
Acting Commissioner



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

P.O. Box 600

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0600

JON S. CORZINE  
*Governor*

STEPHEN DILTS  
*Commissioner*

March 13, 2009

To New Jersey Citizens and Visitors:

It is my privilege and pleasure to endorse the New Jersey Trails Plan. This Plan has been a cooperative partnership by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. This cooperation is based on recognition that many of the goals of this Plan are consistent with desired outcomes from the New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update. In serving a transportation function, trails support *more ways to travel* by providing opportunities for improved fitness and a sense of well-being; they support *healthy streets and communities* and trails can contribute to the *economic vitality* of local communities directly by improving quality of place.

In this time of increased understanding and an increasing sense of urgency about our reliance on fossil fuels and global climate change, the vision, goals and recommendations in this Plan provide us direct and positive ways to take action to mitigate these problems and to reduce our carbon footprint.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation supports the findings and recommendations of the Plan and will continue its support to develop trails as a key strategy in accommodating pedestrian and bicycle travel throughout New Jersey's transportation network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line.

Stephen Dilts  
Commissioner

"IMPROVING LIVES BY IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION"

New Jersey Is An Equal Opportunity Employer • Printed on Recycled and Recyclable Paper





## NEW JERSEY TRAILS COUNCIL

P.O. Box 404, Trenton, NJ 08625 Tel. 609-984-1339, Fax. 609-984-1427

Citizens of New Jersey:

In January 1996, the New Jersey Trails Council brought forward a Trails Plan for New Jersey that set the stage for a new era in trails development. Trails interest was shifting from single-use to multi-use trails. Water trails were on the verge of an explosion in use with the development of affordable lightweight kayaks and canoes. Equestrian trail-riding was expanding in both rider numbers and horse-friendly locations for riding across the state. Mountain and hybrid bicycles were taking bicycle touring off-road into our fields and forests. Off Highway Vehicle users were beginning to seek access to privately and publicly owned lands of the state to enjoy their trail pursuits.

Looming large in this new era was the impact of the federal Recreational Trails Program. Since 1993, grants of more than \$8.5 million have been appropriated for grassroots trail development across the parklands and greenways of New Jersey. Not only have these funds leveraged greater investment for trails in state parks and in rural areas, the program has also encouraged miles of new trails in the state's urban centers and developing suburbs. Often using the routes of the state's abandoned railways, utility rights of way, and heritage transportation corridors, these urban trails systems extend out from our cities to reach across the New Jersey landscape.

Now twelve years after the last Trails Plan was released, the New Jersey Trails Council is pleased to submit this New Jersey Trails Plan Update as a comprehensive analysis of the role of trails and trail uses in the lives of New Jersey residents. This update reflects the combined efforts of the volunteers of the New Jersey Trails Council, a 23-member Trails Plan Advisory Committee, staff from NJDEP and NJDOT and hundreds of federal, state, and regional trails managers, advocates, interested citizens and trail users who contributed to the assessment. This Trails Plan Update identifies the benefits and challenges of providing a thoughtfully planned and environmentally beneficial trails system for a wide range of users. It invites and embraces the participation of government, the non-profit sector, and citizens to meet a new vision for trails in New Jersey.

While much has changed since 1996, this Trails Plan Update echoes the sentiments of nearly every participant in the assessment: trails today have an even more critically important role to play in the lives of New Jerseyans, physically linking communities, providing transportation networks, providing close-to-home infrastructure for family recreation, fitness and wellness activities, and protecting critical natural and historic landscapes, habitats, and open spaces. We hope that the vision presented in this Plan will inspire trail users and decision makers alike to implement the recommendations, keeping New Jersey's place as a state committed to trails innovation, environmental protection, volunteerism, and access for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William D. Foelsch', is written over a horizontal line.

William D. Foelsch, Chair  
New Jersey Trails Council

Photo: NJDEP





## Acknowledgements

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) express their gratitude to the following members of the Trails Plan Advisory Committee for their extensive time and efforts contributing to this Plan. Special recognition is also given to the New Jersey Trails Council, which represents trails interests statewide as advisors to NJDEP and NJDOT. The efforts of the Trails Council led to this Trails Plan update, and many members also served on the Trails Plan Advisory Committee.

### Trails Plan Advisory Committee

James Amon, *D&R Greenway Land Trust*  
Christian Bethmann, *Brendan T. Byrne State Forest*  
Sheree Davis, *NJDOT, Office of Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs*  
William Foelsch, *Morris Township Parks and Recreation*  
Elliot Gott, *Kittatinny Valley State Park*  
Faith Hahn, *Monmouth County Park System*  
Steve Jandoli, *NJDEP, Green Acres Program*  
A. Michele Adams, *NJ Trail Ride Association*  
Al Kent, *Morris County Parks Commission*  
Jeffrey Kerchner, *Burlington County Division of Parks*  
John C. Lovell, *Township of Randolph*  
Larry Miller, *NJDEP, Division of Parks and Forestry*  
Edward Mulvan, *NJDEP, Natural & Historic Resources*  
Robert Newton, *New York - New Jersey Trail Conference*  
Christian Nielsen (Denis Albisser, Alternate), *American Canoe Association/Mohawk Canoe Club*  
William O'Hearn, *New York - New Jersey Trail Conference*  
John Parrinello, *NJ Off-Highway Vehicle Association*  
Elyse Pivnick, *Isles, Inc.*  
Tom Sexton, *Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*  
Patricia A. Swartz, *NJDCA, NJ Office of Recreation*  
Laura Szwak, *NJ Conservation Foundation*  
Wally Tunison, *Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association*

### New Jersey Trails Council

William Foelsch (Chairman), *Morris Township Parks & Recreation*  
A. Michele Adams, *NJ Trail Ride Association*  
Michele Byers (Laura Szwak, Alternate), *New Jersey Conservation Foundation*  
Sheree Davis, *NJDOT, Office of Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs*  
John Flynn (Steve Jandoli, Alternate), *NJDEP, Green Acres Program*  
Edward Goodell (Brenda Holzinger, Alternate) *New York – New Jersey Trail Conference*  
Daneen Morris, *Camden Greenways, Inc.*  
Jeanne Mroczko, *NJDEP, Division of Parks & Forestry*  
Christian Nielsen (Denis Albisser, Alternate), *American Canoe Association/Mohawk Canoe Club*  
John Parrinello, *NJ Off-Highway Vehicle Association*  
Wally Tunison, *Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association*  
Larry Miller (staff), *NJDEP, Division of Parks and Forestry*

This Plan was funded by The Federal Highway Administration under the NJDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Local Technical Assistance Program.



Consultant Team:  
The RBA Group in association with  
Community Trail Connection